

**To: Council**

**Date: 22 July 2019**

**Title of Report: Public addresses and questions that do not relate to matters for decision – as submitted by the speakers and with written responses from Cabinet Members.**

**Republished to include verbal answers given at the meeting.**

## **Introduction**

1. Addresses made by members of the public to the Council, and questions put to the Cabinet members or Leader, registered by the deadline in the Constitution, are below. Any written responses available are also below.
2. The text reproduces that sent in the speakers and represents the views of the speakers. This is not to be taken as statements by or on behalf of the Council.
3. Paragraphs 11.12 and 11.13 of the Constitution set out the rules for public speaking. Speakers can give one address and/or ask one question. Priority will be given to those who have not spoken at Council in the last 12 months.
4. This report has been republished after the Council meeting as part of the minutes pack. This lists the full text of speeches delivered as submitted, summaries of speeches delivered which differ significantly from those submitted, and any further responses.

## **Addresses and questions to be taken in Part 2 of the agenda.**

1. Address by Racky Wane – climate change curriculum
2. Address by Nuha Abdo, Syrian Sisters Community Group
3. Address by Nabeela Talib and Adam Khan - City of Sanctuary
4. Question from Geoffrey Sandford, Oxford Men's Group
5. Address by Artwell – Allowing free speech in the Town Hall
6. Question from Artwell – Apology for mis-statements
7. Address by Judith Harley – CHARITIES APPOINTMENTS
8. Question from Judith Harley – WILLIAM MORRIS SPORTS GROUND

The following addresses and questions were submitted and written responses given. The speakers did not address the Council meeting.

9. Question from Sue Brough – Action to help people likely to experience hate crime
10. Address by Alistair Morris, Marston Community Gardening - Lack of information/difficulty maintaining local group.
11. Question from Sarah Lazenby – Use of Roundup weedkiller

## **1. Address by Racky Wane – climate change curriculum**

Hello, my name is Racky Wane. I'm a student at St Gregory the Great School. I'm sure that many have come to you on the issue of climate change. But I'm here with something different. I'm here to talk about schools, and our participation in the climate change crisis.

Firstly, we need a climate change curriculum. We should bring awareness to the fact that civilisation as we know it may perish, to those who it will affect the most, our generation. We should be able to benefit our future without sacrificing our education. We ask you to contact OFSTED, to ask for an education on what may wipe us out if we don't act now. With a climate change curriculum we can introduce ways that both students and parents can reduce our carbon emissions.

Most importantly, we need to address the fact that schools across Oxford want a say in upcoming discussions concerning proposals in becoming carbon neutral. We are leading in a developing student summit held at St Gregory's and other schools. We record our thoughts and will submit them to the "citizens" assembly, because we demand a say in our future.

Lastly, please support the independent motion to avoid penalising those who are protesting, those who know that there is no use in studying for a future we'll never have.

We want your help as City Councillors to lobby your MP's to introduce a new curriculum, support the student summit, and overall, letting us rewrite our future. Thank you.

### **Written response from the Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford, Councillor Hayes**

*On behalf of Oxford City Council, I want to thank you for calling for more thorough teaching of climate change in school. As you highlight we are facing a climate catastrophe and we must ensure that the young people who will live far into this future are equipped with the knowledge needed to fight, mitigate and hopefully avoid such catastrophe.*

*The Council takes climate change very serious and this is why I have written to the Secretary of State for Education to ask for a review of the National Curriculum and the inclusion of education on climate change.*

*We all have a role to play in combatting climate change and we must all do what we can to raise awareness of this important issue. This is why your City Council strive to take an active role in tackling climate change; we have supported climate strikes in the city, supported the petition started by a group of Cheney School pupils calling for compulsory lessons on climate change and on Clean Air Day we worked with school children to bring the important message of the harm of air pollution to our streets. As you highlight the City Council will be running the country's first true citizens' assembly on climate change in September and October. The purpose of this is to collect a representation of the city's viewpoints, so that we can develop a zero carbon strategy as quickly as possible but also one that has the democratic consent of the city. Hearing from our younger generation though the assembly is important to us and we are committed to have the voice of children and young people heard at the assembly.*

### **Summary of verbal response from the Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford, Councillor Hayes**

Thank you for your address and for calling for more teaching on climate change. I have written to the government's education minister asking for this to happen, and our MPs asking for their support. We want to see significant changes in the way we reduce and mitigate climate change: we want to include young people in our work; support their campaigning; and seek their input.

## 2. Address by Nuha Abdo, Syrian Sisters Community Group

Hello,

My name is Nuha Abdo and I am the founder and coordinator of the Syrian Sisters Community Group. I came to Oxford from Syria in 2016 and I am here today to talk to you about the Syrian Community in Oxford and our experiences of resettling here.

As you may know, Oxford has taken more than 40 families through the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme. This is a government-funded programme that has brought 20,000 people to the UK from the refugee camps in countries around Syria. Families came to Oxford from Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. Others have made their own way here and together we are a community of approximately 300 people.

Oxford is an amazingly welcoming and friendly city and, without exception, the Syrian families who have come here have felt welcomed and safe. We are happy to see our children in schools, we are trying hard to learn English and we all want to get jobs to support our families. In a recent study of the resettlement of the Syrian Community in Oxford by the Refugee Studies Centre, the overwhelming response from participants was that they felt safe, welcome and happy to be here.

I welcome the initiatives in the motion before you today, especially the practical help offered to refugees. But resettlement in a new country is a long process for refugees and there are always difficulties along the way. Finding your place in a new country when you don't speak the language, rebuilding your life when you don't have work and helping your children plan for their futures when you don't fully understand your new environment are all challenging. I would like to talk about one of these difficulties and one of the things that helps.

Learning a new language as an adult is not easy, as some of you may know. Learning a new language with a new script, when you may or may not have been able to read and write in your own language is considerably harder! In 2017 the government allocated £10 million to support refugees arriving on the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme and issued guidance that this should in part be used to ensure that all refugees receive a minimum of 8 hours English Language teaching per week, starting within a month of arrival. Whilst most of the Syrian arrivals in Oxford are attending English classes, mainly at EMBS (*community college*) in Cowley or at the City of Oxford College, I know of none who receive 8 hours a week. Most get 4 hours, a few get 7. Those with young children and babies get none, as nowhere offers language learning and childcare. A recent report by Refugee Action has highlighted the shortfall in language provision for refugees and we certainly feel the effects of this in our community. Without enough English, our daily lives are difficult. We might be able to navigate the bus system after a bit of practice, but when a letter arrives from the council or we receive an email from the tax office we are stuck. Looking for work is obviously difficult and lack of language is the biggest barrier to getting employment for most of our community. Worse still, when we need medical help, have to go for hospital treatment or need to call an ambulance we are really in trouble. One lady in our community gave birth alone in her bathroom because she was unable to call an ambulance when she went into sudden labour last year. The consequences of not receiving enough English language lessons are real and serious, and I would urge the Council to prioritise this in making Oxford a real City of Sanctuary.

So what helps? Organisations like Asylum Welcome, Refugee Resource and Connection Support all assist us in navigating our way in our new country. Arrivals on the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme receive 2 years of support to help us get up and running with housing, schooling and employment. Without these services we would really struggle with the practicalities of resettlement. But rebuilding

our lives also involves rebuilding our relationships, building new friendships, making new connections, and here it is our own community that we depend on most. My group, the Syrian Sisters, enables women in our community to meet each week. We share our difficulties and successes, we share advice and suggestions and we provide each other emotional support through what are sometimes difficult times. We have all been through similar experiences and understand when someone just needs to cry, or wants a hug.

Oxford City Council has been extremely supportive of our group and this year is covering the rental of a room in Rose Hill Community Centre for our weekly meetings. We have also received funding from the Oxfordshire Community Fund to help run the group, the University has supported us to organise events and with St Michael and All Saint's Church has funded us to run a holiday activity camp for our children. Each small grant enables us to do a bit more, but it is hard work constantly looking for funding and applying for grants. Support for community organisations is crucial, and, as the Refugee Studies Centre report suggested, it needs to be more systematically built into the resettlement program.

So, I hope I have given you a sense of our experience of coming to Oxford. We certainly all feel lucky and happy to be in this wonderful city and we hope we can make a real contribution. With enough opportunity to learn English and support for our grassroots community organisations, we will certainly be able to do this.

Thank you.

### **Summary of verbal response from the Leader, Councillor Brown**

Thank you for coming to speak to us. Thank you for raising some very serious issues which we will consider and see how we can help. I have appointed Councillor Djafari-Marbini as the Council's Migrant Champion to support officers in their work helping migrant communities to integrate and settle into the city.

### **3. Address by Nabeela Talib and Adam Khan - City of Sanctuary**

#### **Adam's speech**

Hello ladies and gentlemen.

My name is Adam Khan I'm from Afghanistan.

I came to Oxford in 2007, at the age of 12 as an asylum seeker.

I was passed on to Oxfordshire social services and through them I was given to a foster family. The kind of support I got from social services, they put me in Oxford Spire School and gave me all the support I needed. They used to come and check on me every 3 to 6 months to see how I was progressing and helped me with anything I needed.

I was also supported by the organisation Children's Society, which has now shut down, they helped me with my education they were always there whenever I needed them, they used to hold social activities every week to bring everyone together.

I had the privilege that I was given to such a wonderful foster family where they supported with everything, helped me grow as a person looked after me and pushed me to achieve my best in life. After a lot of struggle I was given refugee status and now I am on my way to getting British citizenship. I work in London and feel settled in this country, like I belong. This would not have been possible if it wasn't for the support I got from Oxford.

As we can see nowadays some youngsters don't have the support they need, they struggle to find youth clubs and groups to keep them engaged and end up taking the wrong path getting involved in drugs and other crime. They might also suffer from mental distress, because being in the asylum system without support can be a very difficult experience. It's very important to have a mentor and the mentor can be the foster family, social worker, teachers, youth club workers, anyone that can guide you to the right path, support you and push to achieve good in life.

I'm sure you all see the benefits of making Oxford a welcoming city for asylum seekers and refugees, and I hope that we can work together to make this happen.

### **Nabeela's Speech**

My family started fostering when I was in year 9. Adam was the first child that came to our house and absolutely transformed our lives. Of course, we didn't know this was going to happen when we first started out. I got the opportunity to learn whilst growing up with Adam about the struggles of navigating the asylum system as a child, going through adolescence whilst being in limbo and not being able to be excited about your future as other young people were, because your status in this country had not yet been approved. He grew resilient and I have always admired his ability to be positive through the toughest of times.

Interacting with social workers, refugee support workers, education professionals, all through Adam, gave me a unique outlook into the world of an unaccompanied asylum seeking child. It made me more curious about refugee rights and ultimately lead me to study social work, qualify and now teach at Oxford Brookes University as a lecturer in social work.

The work that many organisations in Oxford (like Asylum Welcome, Refugee Resource, Oxfordshire County Council) do never fails to amaze me when I compare our small but mighty city with others across the country.

I've done work and research within immigration detention and the area of work with people who have 'No Recourse to Public Funds'. I've seen the immense amount of struggle and distress that people face in a system that fails to provide for them on the basis of their immigration status. As a country, we uphold values of social justice, equality and inclusivity - yet we continue to detain people indefinitely. We welcomed the shutting down of Campsfield House and continue to push for the end of indefinite detention all together.

Oxford committing to becoming a City of Sanctuary for asylum seekers and refugees shows our commitment to upholding human rights and social justice for all. Adam being welcomed into Oxford not only had an impact on his life, but also inspired my own life trajectory and would, in turn, have an effect on the life of the people I teach and work with. We are therefore a good example of how the simple act of receiving the support of a city can create the ripples of transforming entire communities for the better.

### **Summary of verbal response from the Leader, Councillor Brown**

Thank you for coming to speak to us and sharing your inspiring story. Thank you for your contribution to the city and the message you bring us.

#### **4. Question from Geoffrey Sandford, Oxford Men's Group**

Why has the Head of Community Services, who is part of the Senior Management Team at Oxford City Council, failed to respond to our earlier complaint, in which we politely requested a sensible explanation for the banning of an Oxford Men's Group public lecture?

#### **Written response from the Leader, Councillor Brown**

*Unfortunately there was a delay with our mail system so the Head of Community Services has only recently received the letter you posted. I am aware that a reply has now been sent out that includes an offer to meet with you to talk this through.*

#### **Summary of verbal response from the Leader, Councillor Brown**

Our refusal to host your group for this lecture was in no way unlawful. I apologise for the delay in responding to you due to delays in our internal post system, and I understand you now have a response from us.

#### **5. Address by Artwell – Allowing free speech in the Town Hall**

The action of the City Council banning the Rev Dr Jules Gomes who on 12 June 2019 had been invited to give an address titled '*Feminism was women's greatest enemy - until transgenderism came along*' to the Oxford Men's Group meeting at the Town Hall, is in my opinion an unacceptable level of City Council intolerance and unwarranted interference which must be challenged and resisted by all who honour England's legal tradition for having a Free Speech culture.

In the light of the latest Court of Appeal Judgement below, the Council's behaviour in my view certainly constitutes a violation for the Free Expression traditions of England's Common Law, which the Court of Appeal has recently upheld.

For these reasons, I am asking the City Council; together with the Labour leader of the City Council, to offer an unexpurgated apology to all the people of Oxford: specifically to Oxford's Men's Group, for banning their speaker and to Constitutionally adopt a policy pledge to uphold England's tradition for Free Speech on all City Council controlled property, in line with the latest Court of Appeal ruling.

The case of (*R (Ngole) v University of Sheffield [2019] EWCA Civ 1127*) concerned the expression of religious views on Public Social Media platform, disapproving of homosexual acts, by a student, enrolled on a two-year MA social work course at the University of Sheffield. At the heart of the case was whether the expression of such views was a legitimate expression of freedom of speech, or incompatible with being a registered social worker. The Court of Appeal found that Sheffield University behaved illegally by punishing this student for sharing on Facebook his "disapproval of homosexual acts," and the Appeal Court has counselled the University to review its expulsion decision and reform how students who use Social Media to share their opinions are treated.

With the City Council banning Oxford's Men's Group speakers, this is in my view clear evidence of Oxford City Council being unduly influenced by Left-wing dogma; which has resulted with the Executive Officer for Communities banning the Oxford Men's Group speaker: in my opinion the City Council's decision reveals the degree to which Left-wing ideology has replaced and superseded the impartial application of England's Common Law and traditions by Public Servants.

I trust the City Council will repent of what in my view are its present and past Public Service failures to protect England's tradition for free critical speech and debate.

In my view the people of Oxford desire a future whereby people are free to share their thoughts and views in writing; or on Social Media and on Oxford City Council administered Public Spaces, without censure or banning by representatives of the City Council or elected City Councillors.

For these reasons, I am asking the City Council; together with the Labour leader of the City Council, to offer an unexpurgated apology to all the people of Oxford: specifically to Oxford's Men's Group, for banning their speaker and to Constitutionally adopt a policy pledge to uphold England's tradition for Free Speech on all City Council controlled property, in line with the latest Court of Appeal ruling.

### **Written response from the Leader, Councillor Brown**

*Cancelling the event booking for the talk Dr Gomes planned to give did not breach his freedom of expression.*

*We did not ban him from expressing his views. The right to freedom of expression does not mean someone has to be able to express their views in one of our buildings and we are not obliged to provide a platform for this to take place.*

*The right to freedom of expression does not mean people can fail to respect other people's rights. Oxford City Council members have consistently voted to stand up for those groups with protected characteristics – be that to do with sex, gender reassignment, religious belief or any other characteristics protected by legislation. We apply these values within our event booking terms and conditions.*

*When we investigated complaints about the talk Dr Gomes proposed to give - "Feminism was women's great enemy until transgenderism came along" - we considered that the rights and freedoms of women and LGBTQIA+ people would not be protected if it went ahead. We agreed that the talk would breach section 5.3 of our booking terms and conditions for this reason.*

**The Leader, Councillor Brown, read out the written response above.**

## 6. Question from Artwell – Apology for mis-statements

Oxford City Council's Councillor Shaista Aziz, a national equalities campaigner working on hate crime, is reported in the Oxford Mail on the 15th January 2019 said in relation to an alleged incident of racism that "*This is absolutely disgraceful and my thoughts go out to the family who must be shaken - and more so because young children witnessed this racial abuse.*

*"The bus company should investigate this matter thoroughly, provide a full, transparent response (and) review how it trains staff."*

She continued: "*Racism and bigotry is manifesting more openly due to the political climate and everyday people going about their lives are feeling the consequences. I applaud the family for reporting this and going public because we as a community and society need to urgently address racism.*

*"It is not enough for anyone to say that these incidents are one off - they aren't."*

Following this allegation a member of staff using racist language to abuse a passenger, Oxford Mail reported on the investigation of this allegation 29th April 2019 that: "*Thames Travel has concluded an investigation and said that its Revenue Protection Official, who was working on the X38 service on January 9, has no case to answer.*"

This is the strongest language the investigation can use signifying the whole "hate" incident was, in my opinion, fabricated by the accuser and her supporters, possibly for their Left-wing political agenda.

In the light of the Elected Councillor for Rosehill continuing campaign against "hate" it is vitally important for Oxford City Council to apologise on behalf of the Councillor for Rosehill, for the distress her support for this "hate" accusation could well have caused to Thames Valley's Revenue Protection Official's profession; his family and his social standing?

**Will the City Council apologise for the additional distress caused by the Council's Elected Councillor's support has caused to this innocent employee of Thames Valley Transport?**

### **Written response from the Leader, Councillor Brown**

*Unfortunately we are in a situation where there has been a big increase in the number of reported hate crimes and racist abuse. It is important for those of us who are elected representatives to support those who have experienced abuse, to call it out when we see it and to ensure allegations are properly investigated.*

### **Summary of verbal responses**

There was no further response from the Leader, Councillor Brown

Councillor Aziz, having been named in the address, exercised her right to reply.



## 7. Address by Judith Harley – CHARITIES APPOINTMENTS

Lord Mayor, Councillors,

*I am addressing you about your responsibilities as charity trustees in general and about council policy, not about a specific charity.*

Last month I had cause to address the Cabinet about the City Council's appointments to Outside Bodies, in particular their appointments of Charity Trustees. In response to my address Councillor Brown explained that:

***“ .... the Council's policy was now that all appointments to these bodies are filled by elected Councillors to fulfil the role as a contact between the body and the Council.”***

Following the Cabinet meeting I enquired of Council Officers as to when this policy decision was taken, and where I might find reference to or documentary evidence for this. Officers replied that this

***“ .... is not a formal policy position. It is rather the approach that the Council has taken over the last few years in order to promote stronger links between the Outside Body and the Council.”***

I would have expected that such a change of approach must have been discussed, and the approach formally decided and documented somewhere, and sent for authorisation to the Charity Commission, but further enquiry to Officers prompted the reply

***“ .... I don't believe that this is supported by any documentary evidence other than the annual lists of individual appointments which .... Cabinet approves in May or June each year.”***

There are several things wrong with this. First, the role of a Trustee is not to act as a contact or promote stronger links between the Outside Body and the Council, but to run the Charity. Second, Charity Trustees are answerable to the Charity Commission before they are answerable to the City Council, and their appointments are governed by Charity Commission regulations. Third, has the City Council notified the Charity Commission of their change of policy in appointing Charity Trustees?

The Charity Commission's guidance for Trustees states that

***“ .... all trustees, regardless of how they are appointed, must act solely in the interests of the charity; it's not their role to act on behalf of any particular group.”***  
And ***“ .... when running your charity you must carry out your charity's purposes for the public benefit.”***

Some Councillors nominated as Trustees by the Council are most conscientious, and attend meetings on a regular basis. Other are less so, and some do not attend a single meeting during their appointment as a Trustee. Even conscientious Trustees have commented to me recently that, as Council appointees, they weren't "proper Trustees". Oh, yes, you are!

I would respectfully remind all Councillors who have been appointed as Trustees by the City Council that you ARE proper Trustees, with an important role to undertake for the Charity to which you have been appointed, and that your attendance and input at meetings are not optional. Your obligations to the Charity are over and above, and separate and distinct from, your obligations to the Council. I would also respectfully ask the Council to consider its position with their appointment policy and to consider, and comply with, Charity Commission requirements when making such policy changes.

Thank you.

### **Written response from the Leader, Councillor Brown**

*I note that we have already had this debate via correspondence and that you have already raised this at Cabinet.*

*May I remind you that the Council has met its obligations in regard to appointments to the Elder Stubbs Charity which are to appoint 6 nominated trustees, each appointment for a term of 4 years, and that those nominated trustees represent or are resident in the "preferred area" as set out in the Charity scheme.*

*Provided these requirements are met (which are more onerous and precise than any other body to which the council appoints) then the Council's approach to appointing the nominated trustees is a matter for the Council and does not require authorisation from the Charity Commission or the charity.*

*All Councillors who volunteer to serve as Trustees are made aware of their responsibilities to the charity to which they have been appointed.*

*We have on more than one occasion said that it might be sensible for Elder Stubbs Charity to reduce the number of trustees it seeks from the council and if it still feels the need to appoint more trustees to appoint them from elsewhere in the community.*

### **Summary of verbal from the Leader, Councillor Brown**

*Provided that in nominating trustees to a charity the council meets any requirements for that nomination, it is not for the charity to then query the nomination. All councillors are aware of their responsibilities to support the charity both as representatives of the council and as trustees, and they can do this effectively in their dual role. It is up to each charity to decide whether it wishes to ask the council to nominate a councillor to act as trustee, and we expect that the charity has its own good reasons for making the request. We won't be changing our approach.*

*Thank you for raising these issues with us.*

## **8. Question from Judith Harley – WILLIAM MORRIS SPORTS GROUND**

Lord Mayor, Councillors,

Given the recent remarkable triumph of England's Cricket Team, and the growing interest in women's sport, including football, netball, and hockey, priority should be given to encourage everyone, especially schoolchildren, to embrace fitness and sport. Statistics show that fewer children these days take physical exercise, and physical exercise is proven to be good for both physical and mental well-being.

Almost two years ago, on behalf of the residents of Temple Cowley, I asked you, as our local authority, to make a compulsory purchase of the William Morris Sports Ground, in order to restore it as a sports ground available for public use. We believe that there is a compelling case that this should be done in the public interest, and that such a move will promote the social and environmental well-being of our area. At the time of my original request your reply was that you were not looking to expand your property portfolio. Two years on the site is still boarded, and I am asking you to reconsider, and bring this site back into beneficial public use. Since 2012 this space has been the subject of numerous planning applications for housing development, all of which have been opposed by residents and refused by the City Council because of the site's Protected Open Space status. Two planning appeals against these refusals have been

dismissed for the same reason. The City Council has supported residents in all these cases. At this moment there is yet another planning application awaiting consideration. We know that the draft Local Plan 2036 suggests that this site is suitable for either housing or leisure, but residents and the residents' association (OTCRA) are opposing this and arguing that this site should remain as protected open space, allocated for leisure only. It is not too late for the Council to change the designation of this.

It is high time to break this deadlock and return the site to its original use. This is NOT a "redundant sports field and car park", as the owner tries to make out; it would still be available for formal and informal recreation had the present owner not fenced it off and rendered it publicly unusable. We appreciated the presence of this open space within what is a relatively densely developed area. It adjoins a primary school, and their children, as well as residents, would benefit from this open, safeguarded sports area. Who knows what future sports champions might be nurtured here?

Councillors – I am again asking YOU to make a compulsory purchase of the William Morris Sports Ground, in order to restore it as a sports facility for public use and to promote the social and environmental well-being of our area. With increasing housing development all around us we need increasing leisure facilities in Temple Cowley. I am sure that this move would be supported by our ward councillors and others. As Protected Open Space, with no planning permission for development, this site should be valued as allotments or agricultural land – as, indeed, was the valuation for the land for Barton Park – which is currently around £12000 - £15000 per acre in Oxford. This is quite affordable for the City Council. We believe that taking this land for sport and recreational use is absolutely necessary and that there is a "compelling case in the public interest". If this site is developed it will be gone for ever.

**Will you step up to the plate and safeguard this as a sporting space for future generations by making a compulsory purchase order on this site? Thank you.**

**Written response from the Cabinet Member for Finance and Asset Management, Councillor Turner (also read out after the address)**

*I am afraid that the Council's position remains unchanged from the previous response and there are no plans to compulsory purchase the land at William Morris Close. The law around compulsory purchase is such that the City Council would stand little prospect of success, and funds are not available to support such a process.*

The following addresses and questions were submitted and written responses given. The speakers did not address the Council meeting.

**9. Question from Sue Brough – Action to help people likely to experience hate crime**

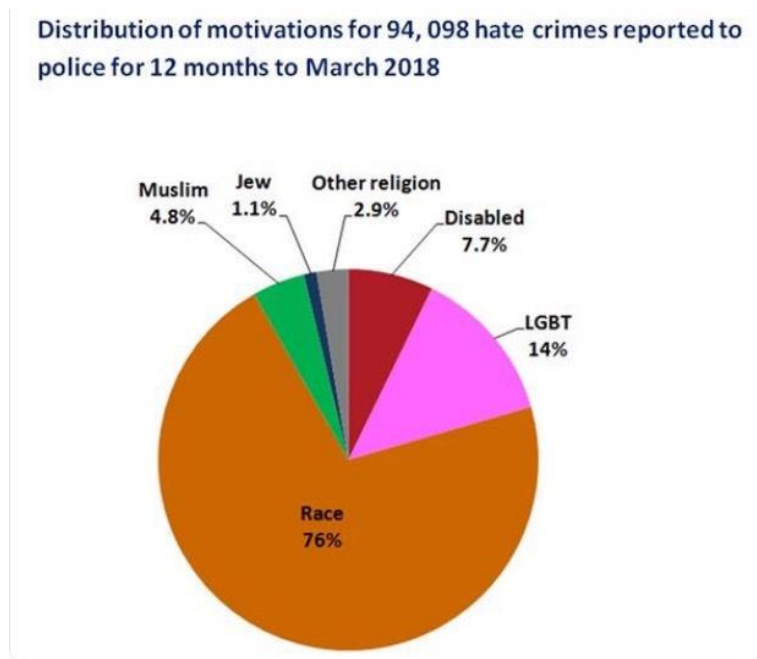
No one can doubt Oxford City Council’s well-publicised commitment to fight anti-Semitism and hate crimes against LGBT people.

However the pie chart (below) reveals that hate crimes motivated by race account for three quarters of the total.

Last week saw two inquests into violent deaths, whilst in the custody of Thames Valley Police, of two men of African heritage.

**What action is Oxford City Council taking to help the people most likely to experience hate crime?**

I believe the source of this data is the Home Office.



**Written response from the Cabinet Member for Safer Communities and Customer Focused Services, Councillor Chapman**

*Hate crime can be a particularly frightening experience because the victim has been targeted because of who they are, or who or what the attacker thinks they are, so the attack is very personal and specifically targeted. The effects of hate crime are not limited to the immediate victims and they can also affect others who learn of such events. As a result of hearing about hate crime the most common responses from the community affected are anger, anxiety and feelings of vulnerability.*

*Thames Valley Police recorded a slight increase in hate crime occurrences of 4% between 2018-19 compared to the year before, from 4,176 to 4,353.*

*Oxford City Council works with other agencies to deliver the Oxford Safer Communities Partnership's annual plan and one of the priorities for 2019-20 is responding to hate crimes by working with our communities and partner organisations to encourage reporting and delivering interventions.*

*A Partnership hate crime plan has been developed to support victims of hate crime and activities include a Hate crime awareness week, working with the police to promote reporting through their "Hidden harm" campaign and including a Hate crime page on the Council's website. The current Oxford Community Safety Partnership Hate Crime Action Plan is available on the Oxford City Council website.*

*All hate crime offences are reviewed by a specialist police officer and where necessary the Community Safety Service works closely with the Police on problem solving repeat hate crimes*

### **10. Address by Alistair Morris, Marston Community Gardening - Lack of information/difficulty maintaining local group.**

Hello, I spoke several months ago about the desperate need to plant many more trees.

Still don't know, what's going on? Is it happening? No evidence on the ground, as far as I can see, eg Marston Rd still has several dead trees and no new ones...The roadside verges remain just as sparse, although there has been some success with a recently planted community wood at Cutteslowe Park, and hopefully, another one being planted in New Marton Rec, in the autumn. I suppose my main complaint, apart from the lack of trees, would be lack of knowledge/information about what's going on and what's planned? Surely we need a council office/team/department tackling climate change and offering help, advice and support? We need more guidance and coordination from our local government...? Perhaps you could issue a pamphlet to every household in Oxford, with more information, advice and explanation as to what is happening, and how to find out more, what to do, and how to get involved? Relying on the media and individual councillors isn't comprehensive enough, it needs to be coordinated and centralised, ideally with a team dedicated to this purpose?

Top American universities are now saying we've only got 5 years to start getting this under control, Prince Charles says we have to do it in the next 18 months!!!! Sir David has said the end of civilisation is on the horizon! XR are down in London again this week, because not enough is being done, and it's all happening too slowly!

We ALL need to be doing this, and NOW....

- Providing more food and cover for our insects and bees.
- Planting many, many more trees.
- Growing substantially more of our food locally in our communities, and composting more of our own organic waste.
- Embracing renewables and energy efficiency much more earnestly and rapidly.

So, I would like to draw to your attention my second complaint which is lack of ongoing support and funding for local community groups trying to make a difference...

Marston Community Gardening has already planted a Community Orchard with the help of pupils from St Nicholas School in Marston.

We have planted thousands of bulbs and dozens of trees, throughout Marston.

Helped Mortimer Pre School with their Nature Garden.

We have organised and PAID for 2 outside taps to be installed at New Marston Primary School, for their Gardening club to use for watering the vegetable raised beds, and the recently planted mini wood copse, that we, MCG, have helped set up and support!!!

We are hoping to plant a Community Wood of over 200 trees in New Marston Rec this November.

We are still, after 2 years!!!, looking for a space in Marston for a Community shed, which we desperately need, to build vegetable boxes for the elderly and less able, and to store equipment, recycled garden furniture, tools, implements, containers and compost. Marston does not currently have anywhere like this for communal use of outdoor materials. How hard can this be? Plenty of potential locations, just need the full weight of support from the Council and the permission from the public, or church, landowner!!!

Next year we hope to have a Community allotment, BUT under the current rules, we are NOT allowed to rent a plot and grow food communally, as a community group.! You need to get that sorted!!!!?

Finally, our biggest challenge is to run a Community electric car sharing scheme...

I tell you all this, to show you our achievements and our ambitions, but also, to convince you of our desire, drive, commitment and determination to do our best to support local community and to tackle climate change..

For this to continue, we need your support and continuing funding, and as of yet, nothing is forthcoming from anyone this financial year, despite my best efforts? It's SO hard applying for grants, and demoralising when they don't come through..

I hope I have brought to your attention, the abilities and the potential of local groups to make a positive contribution to tackling the climate crisis, and have emphasized our frustrations at lack of knowledge/information, coordination and funding, so that you may be fully appreciative of our contribution, and will action these points as fast as is humanly possible...

Thank You,

Saving the Planet, one tree at a time.... :-)

**There was no written response to this address**

## 11. Question from Sarah Lazenby – Use of Roundup weedkiller

Monsanto's product Roundup (a branded weedkiller containing glyphosate) is the subject of an increasing number of class actions and judicial compensation claims. It is linked with being a carcinogen and a public health menace.

**Will Oxford City Council review, as a matter of urgency, its continuing use of Roundup?**

### **Written response from the Cabinet Member for Safer Communities and Customer Focussed Services, Councillor Chapman**

*This is an issue which divides opinion amongst international experts. Reviews by EU and other international health related institutions have led to the continued licensing of weedkiller products containing glyphosate.*

*We will continue to use the product in a controlled manner whilst it is still licenced. We will of course monitor the situation and if conclusive evidence were to emerge of harm to humans of exposure to these weedkiller products, we would urgently review our use of them. But so far that evidence is inconclusive and experts do not find it compelling or strong enough to ban products containing glyphosate.*

*ODS (via a specialist contractor, Charlton Environmental) applies glyphosate in accordance with manufacturers and industry standards to all street pavements and associated hard surface areas two to three times annually throughout the city (approximately 320 litres used in total). This is carried out as a pedestrian operation and is a spot treatment only, meaning only visible weeds are targeted. We do this using controlled droplet applicators (CDA), and so very little visible residue is left behind on the street surface. This helps to minimise the volume of pesticide being applied, and is the safest method of application available for our operators and for the public. This method of application uses far less product, down from 200L per hectare through conventional knapsack sprayers, to between 15L and 40L per hectare using CDA machines. The products themselves have also changed, so that formulations are now safer to the public, operatives and wildlife, and most are 'clean label' and do not now even carry an irritant warning.*

*In recent years we have also applied glyphosate around the bases of all trees, so that the need for strimming throughout the season is minimised. This was brought in due to concerns surrounding the strimming causing damage to the trees across Oxford, and is usually a one off treatment in April, or in line with the first cut of the season.*

*We continue to monitor any debate about the future licencing of this product and we will only continue to use it whilst it is licenced.*

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